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Canadian women's gymnastics team clinches Olympic berth

Posted Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Video - [Victoria Moors - Floor](#), [Kristina Vaculik - Beam](#), [Peng Peng Lee - Beam](#)

Interviews: [Peng Peng Lee](#), [Brittany Rogers](#), [Madeline Gardiner](#)

LONDON, England -- The Canadian women's gymnastics team clinched a berth at the 2012 Olympics with an impressive performance at the last chance qualification meet on Wednesday, placing second in a field of eight teams battling for the final four spots at the Games.

The Canadians came out firing on all cylinders in the vault event and never looked back enroute to placing second with a total score of 221.913 points just behind top ranked Italy with a score of 224.621.

The other two teams to qualify were France in third with 220.744 points and Brazil in fourth at 217.985.

The top eight nations at the recent world championships in Tokyo qualified directly for the 2012 Games while teams ranked 9th to 16th, including 11th place Canada, advanced to the London meet.

On vault, three of the five Canadian competitors landed high difficulty double twisting Yurchenkos with former Ottawa resident Talia Chiarelli, who now lives in Boston, leading the way with a score of 14.500. Victoria Moors of Cambridge, Ont., was right behind at 14.400 and Brittany Rogers of Vancouver scored 14.200 in an eye-popping overall performance.

"I think only the athletes truly understand how much work has gone into this performance," said Rogers, who has battled back from a career threatening ankle injury to win a spot on the team.

"We missed Christmas and New Year's this year to get ready which was really hard and it absolutely paid off here."

Peng Peng Lee of Toronto was the top Canadian all around and tied Kristina Vaculik of Whitby, Ont., for the team's best score on uneven bars (14.33).

"I'm so excited, this is the most amazing feeling I've ever had," said Lee. "We're all thrilled with the result."

Moors, a new addition to the team along with Rogers since the Tokyo world championships in October, was tops on floor with a score of 14.183 and Canadian all around champion Madeline Gardiner had the best result on beam with 14.133 points.

"I was very scared but I am gaining confidence every day," said Moors, 15, the youngest member of the team and current Canadian junior champion. "Qualifying for the Games is like a dream come true."

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Canada failed to qualify a full team in women's gymnastics for the Beijing Olympics, adding an extra soupçon of satisfaction to the current team's success in London.

The gymnastics test event continues on Thursday with apparatus finals for both men and women and on Friday attention shifts to the last-chance competition for trampoline gymnasts, including Canada's Jason Burnett of Toronto and Keegan Soehn of Red Deer, Alta.

Burnett, the 2008 Olympic silver medal winner, just missed qualifying at the world championships in November, but has since fully recovered from a foot injury that held him back and is expected to earn one spot for Canada in men's trampoline.

At the world championships Karen Cockburn and Rosannagh MacLennan, both of Toronto, earned two Olympic spots for Canada by finishing in the top eight.

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